



*District of Columbia Government*  
*Department of Public Works*



## **Commercial Business Recycling Technical Assistance Guide**



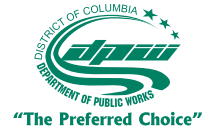
### ***Office of Recycling***

3220 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
202-645-8245 (Hot Line)  
202-645-6518 (Fax)  
E-mail: [recycles@dc.gov](mailto:recycles@dc.gov)  
Web: [www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov](http://www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov)

*This guide is intended as a supplement to the DC Commercial Recycling Guide. To obtain a copy of the DC Commercial Recycling Guide please contact the DC Office of Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245. Recycling is mandatory in the District of Columbia.*



# *Commercial Business Recycling Technical Assistance Guide*



## **Table of Contents**

FORWARD

DESIGNING YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM

BUILDING MANAGERS'/OWNERS' CONCERNS

TENANTS' CONCERNS

MAINTENANCE PROVIDER'S CONCERNS

SMALL BUSINESSES CONCERNS

TIPS FOR HAULER NEGOTIATION

"SELF-IMPLEMENTATION" - AN ALTERNATIVE TO PICK-UPS

RECYCLING PROGRAM' CHECKLIST

HAULERS' REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

SAMPLE LETTERS, MEMOS and SIGNS

APPENDIX



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**



## FORWARD

---

All businesses, including offices, stores, non-profits and other establishments operating in the District of Columbia are required to recycle. The DC Department of Public Works, Office of Recycling has prepared this guidebook to assist businesses in developing cost-effective, and practical recycling programs that comply with District laws, benefit businesses and help the environment. There is no one perfect recycling system. Therefore, do not feel compelled to strictly adhere to the process we have laid out. Certain parts of this guide may be appropriate for a particular type of business, while other sections may be less useful. Readers are encouraged to select those sections that offer the most helpful guidance.



FORWARD



## GETTING STARTED

First, obtain and review a copy of the DC Commercial Recycling Guide, which outlines the District of Columbia's recycling requirements and is available from:

DC Office of Recycling,  
3220 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE,  
Washington, DC 20020,  
202-645-8245 Recycling Hotline, 202-645-8518 fax, and [recycle@dc.gov](mailto:recycle@dc.gov) e-mail, or, visit [www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov](http://www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov)



## CHOOSING AND WORKING WITH A RECYCLING COORDINATOR

*Completion of the DC recycling plan requires that you identify a Recycling Coordinator. This individual is someone whom you trust to create and manage a program satisfying the District's commercial recycling requirements. In making the selection, consider that much of the work requires creativity and the ability to draw assistance from coworkers. Look for individuals with enthusiasm in matters of the environment or resource conservation.*

The individual you select must have your full support. If possible, make it easy for this person to have access to you so that you can remain apprised of the program's progress.

It may be helpful for the recycling coordinator to attend recycling conferences and confer with other recycling program coordinators in businesses and in government.

Your enthusiastic promotion of new procedures will foster change. An initial meeting, along with a letter or memorandum from you or the general manager, introducing the recycling coordinator and indicating the company's commitment to the creation of a recycling program, is helpful. Employee updates, newsletters, articles, or similar signals of support should follow this letter in order to demonstrate both the program's importance and a proven history of results.

## CLARIFYING GOALS

After choosing a recycling coordinator, outline his or her new duties and responsibilities. At this point you may want to take some time and clarify the goals for the recycling effort. The more clearly you present your company's priorities for a recycling program, the easier it will be to design a program which addresses those goals.

*Programs which never record achievements are much more vulnerable to criticism, employee apathy and/or contractor failures. It doesn't take more than a rumor of janitorial staff or trucking services mixing garbage with recyclables for general employees to start abandoning the program if feel their efforts are wasted.*

Some of the goals listed below may apply to your company; you may also have other goals not listed here:

- *Compliance with D.C. law*
- *Reduction of waste disposal costs*
- *Improved physical property management*
- *Improved or enhanced environmental quality*
- *Reduction of waste volume*
- *Good corporate citizenship*
- *Adjusting responsibilities of maintenance staff*
- *Improved handling of secure materials (ie. Shredding sensitive documents or properly retiring computer data storage hardware)*
- *Improved handling of potentially hazardous materials (e.g. chemicals or fluorescent bulbs)*

## **STRUCTURING YOUR PROGRAM**

Effective recycling can be accomplished in many ways. The goal is to develop a practical, cost effective, and, above all, sustainable program. A key factor in your success will be the convenience of your program in the eyes of participants: ie. guests, tenants, and/or employees. Seek to incorporate new information and refine the program as you proceed. The type of recycling program you design for your establishment may depend on different factors including space constraints, your lease agreement, the way your trash is currently handled, and the capabilities of your trash and recycling hauler.

You should work with your registered recycling hauler in setting up your recycling program (unless you are an approved **Self-Implementer**). Invite representatives from your tenants, custodial and maintenance crews, etc. to participate in developing the program by scheduling a formative meeting or by selecting an advisory committee. This will encourage interested parties to contribute their input and feedback. Furthermore, their involvement may foster teamwork and the cooperative spirit necessary for the program to succeed. It may be helpful to have copies of recycling information, brochures, employee handbooks, custodial instructions, etc. in both English and a secondary language (for example, Spanish).

## **TYPES OF COLLECTION**

There are basically two types of operations for the collection system: (i) internal, in which recyclables from separate waste generation stations are combined inside; and (ii) external, in which materials are stored outside for removal and transport to a market.

### **Internal Collection System**

How does the custodial/maintenance staff empty the solid waste? Use this and similar information to design the internal collection system. Existing routines should be preserved to the greatest degree possible. For example, if custodial workers empty trash into rolling carts, you may want to use specially marked, differently-colored rolling carts for recyclable collections. If trash is collected in plastic bags, consider purchasing plastic bags of different colors for recyclable collections..

Keep in mind transparent bags may be best for collecting recyclable materials as it allows you to monitor contamination – in the worst cases, significant contamination may cause a hauling service to add your materials to a load of solid waste.

The mechanics of an internal collection system will depend on the following factors:

- Number of employees to be served by the collection system;
- Type of material collected (make sure at a minimum to collect all materials required by law);
- Physical characteristics of the material;
- Availability and location of storage capacity; and
- Quantity of material available at each generating station.

## External Collection System

The type of containers used on your loading dock or parking lot will depend on the hauler you have chosen and whether they offer you the opportunity to “commingle” or “single stream” your recyclables. Just remember: the more work they ask from your employees and tenants (in this case, we’re speaking of separating materials into different containers), the more benefits you should see in reductions to your hauling costs. Shop around. Allow the haulers to compete for your materials.

## Source Separation vs. Post-Collection Separation

*The law that requires you to source separate recyclables from solid waste. Source separation means that you place recyclables into a separate container from the regular solid waste container before they are hauled away. A system in which all solid waste is commingled with recyclables at your facility, which depends upon the hauler to remove recyclables from the trash, is unacceptable.*

### Source Separation Systems



**Bin System** – In a bin system, recyclable materials are separated from solid waste when placed in rigid containers (bins). These bins are typically the size of a small wastebasket, and made out of cardboard or plastic. Bins are normally placed next to workers’ desks or in tenants’ units, near their trash containers. Employees, tenants, and maintenance staff empty personal-sized bins into a larger, central collection container.



The maintenance staff in turn collects the central containers to be collected by recycling haulers. The major advantage of bin systems is that they are usually convenient for the users (e.g., tenants or employees).

**Bag System** – Another recycling option is to separate recyclables and place them into specially colored bags. The bags may then be collected by your recycling hauler in a dedicated vehicle. This type of recycling system is commonly referred to as a “blue bag” system. These bags should have a different appearance than trash bags (e.g. clear or blue bags are often used), and should be sized so that, when filled, they can be easily handled in the collection system. Once the bags are filled, they can be placed in designated recycling containers and collected by a recycling hauler.

The major advantage of a bag system is that it is helpful to cleaning staff because it clarifies and reinforces your programs intentions to handle specific materials as separate streams. Keep in mind that transparent bags for your recyclables also helps to audit where contaminants may be entering the wrong containers.

**Note:** Use of a Bag System does not permit you the use of a single container to store solid waste with the mandated recyclables, e.g. within dumpsters serviced at your loading dock or parking lot. ***Solid waste must be containerized separately from the mandated recyclables at the point of pick-up.***

**Chute System** – If your building has a trash chute, you may use your chute to collect recyclable materials. To keep recyclable materials separate from the trash, you can either use specially-colored bags, or else use a modified chute system. A modified chute system may require the existing chute to be retrofitted with additional equipment. If space is available in the trash room on each floor, recycling containers can be provided for users to deposit their recyclables. Maintenance personnel can then empty the containers into the chute at the appointed time of the day, collecting the material in a dedicated recycling container at the bottom. If a lockout system is installed, maintenance staff can lockout all other floors while placing recyclables in the chute to avoid inadvertent contamination from trash being placed in the chute from other floors.

Another option is for the custodial or maintenance staff to go to each trash room and collect recyclable materials, then take them to the central location for collection.

# ADDRESSING BUILDING MANAGERS'/OWNERS' CONCERNS



Building owners are responsible for implementing an effective recycling program to comply with the District's recycling laws. This responsibility is often delegated to building managers, resident managers, and facility engineers. They must provide places to store separated, recyclable materials as well as a place for a service company to collect them. They need to set up a recycling program that works for all. Provided below are answers to questions commonly asked by building managers/owners, resident managers and engineers when planning and implementing an effective recycling program.

## What should I do first when developing the building's recycling program?

We require that a representative of the building manager/owner is designated as the building's recycling coordinator. The recycling coordinator should be able to take charge of developing and overseeing the building's recycling and source reduction program. The recycling coordinator should be able to make decisions or work with decision makers. Also, it may be beneficial to have representatives of your tenants, maintenance and custodial staff, recycling hauler, etc., participate in developing the program by scheduling a formative meeting or by selecting an advisory committee. This will encourage interested parties to contribute their input and feedback and may foster teamwork and the cooperative spirit helpful for the program's success.

## What activities may be necessary to initially set up the program?

Initial activities for a recycling program may include: designing the collection/processing/storage system in conjunction with the building's maintenance staff, negotiating recycling hauler services, developing the education program, procuring necessary containers/equipment, and developing the recycling plan required by the District.

## What will the program cost? How can the cost be reduced?

Program costs can potentially include the fees of a recycling hauler, additional maintenance services, containers/equipment, educational materials, and time to devote to planning and implementing the program. Ideas to reduce program costs include:

- Soliciting bids to find the most cost-effective recycling hauler who can meet your needs
- Rearranging or substituting for existing solid waste services to accommodate new recycling practices
- Retrofitting existing containers for new uses
- Taking advantage of the educational materials provided by the DC Office of Recycling
- Finding interested volunteers from the building to develop and oversee the program
- Contact your local business association request information on 'best practices' in recycling

## What on-going activities may be necessary for the program?

Every two years you must update the recycling program that was approved by the District and you must comply with it. In addition, on-going activities for a recycling program may include continuing education activities, monitoring program effectiveness, and record-keeping.



## BUILDING MANAGERS' / OWNERS CONCERNS

## How can I gain the support of tenants and increase their participation?

Ideas to increase tenant participation include:

- Designating a recycling coordinator to field questions and comments, and address problems and suggestions;
- Designing a program that is as simple and convenient as possible;
- Providing tenants with information so they understand how the program works and why it is necessary;
- Working with tenant representatives to advise them of the District's requirements and the program benefits;
- Involving interested tenant representatives in a formative meeting or advisory committee to solicit their input and feedback;
- Amending lease agreements by adding clauses that require tenants to participate in the building's recycling and source reduction measures;
- Developing procurement, source-reduction, and recycling recommendations for commercial tenants;
- Publicizing participation levels and program results;
- Fostering competitions among segments of the building;

## Will the program require more space?

In many instances, your program need not require significant additional space. Work with your recycling hauler to come up with some creative ideas for space-saving techniques using special containers, equipment (small balers, etc.) or mixes of materials (e.g. combining paper and cardboard, or mixing all recyclables as a "single stream").

Keep in mind that you may see financial benefits from maintaining separation of certain materials, such as white ledger paper or baled cardboard, however if space is still limited, forgo those collection systems that cannot be accommodated in the space allotted for waste handling. Here the District of Columbia recycling law does not require multiple separations: only solid waste and city-mandated recyclables.

Do visit the DC Dept. of Consumer and Regulatory affairs, at [www.dcrd.doe.dc.gov](http://www.dcrd.doe.dc.gov), District Dept. of the Environment, at [www.ddoe.dc.gov](http://www.ddoe.dc.gov) and the US Environmental Protection Agency at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), to learn if additional laws govern your disposal of other waste materials including chemicals, electronics and food items.

## Why should we have a recycling program?

Beyond complying with the requirements of the District's recycling law, recycling can: 1) help reduce the costs of disposal by reducing the amount of waste, 2) improve the efficiency with which business resources are handled, 3) protect the environment and conserve natural resources, 4) demonstrate environmental commitment, and 5) foster goodwill in the community. In addition, by recycling, your building will play a part in helping to solve the District's solid waste problem.

## What else can we do to become "greener"?

Establish source reduction for your building. Focus these efforts on the building's common areas and maintenance services. Good examples include: composting yard waste, using a mulching lawn mower,

installing long-lasting or energy efficient light bulbs or fixtures, and installing reusable furnace or air conditioning filters. Other actions that may benefit the environment include using non-toxic products for cleaning, pest control, snow removal, lawn care, maintenance or plumbing, using paper products made from recycled materials and using warm air hand dryers.



## ADDRESSING TENANTS' CONCERNS



In order to successfully implement a recycling program, building owners and managers must take into account the needs of tenants, maintenance staff, and the trash and recycling haulers. Provided below are some commonly asked questions by tenants during the implementation of recycling programs, followed by ideas to address their concerns.

### What is a tenant's role in the program?

Building tenants generate waste and are responsible for initially depositing waste materials into the appropriate container for disposal, recycling or reuse.

### How does the recycling program work? What types of materials will be recycled? What type of containers will be used? How often do I need to recycle? How do materials need to be prepared?

Try to involve tenants early in the development of the program by inviting tenant representatives to an information meeting or to serve on an advisory committee. This way they can contribute their input and feedback into the development of the new program. A continuing education program will be essential to convey important information to tenants. Be sure to provide them with sufficient informational materials describing how the program will work. To properly prepare this information, make sure you have clearly identified your containers, and have thoughtfully considered the best locations for collection. In addition, be sure you understand what your hauler's preparation requirements are: What types of plastics are acceptable? Must paper be separated from cans and bottles? Must caps and lids be removed? Providing tenants and staff with clear, simple instructions regarding their participation is essential to the success of your program. To that end, work with your recycling hauler on how to prepare your materials. Furthermore, collection points and containers should be clearly identified so there will be no confusion.

### How much work will recycling involve?

Ideally, your recycling programs should be designed to be as convenient for tenants as possible. Delegating more tasks to maintenance staff, such as emptying deskside containers into central collection containers, will result in more convenience to tenants and greater participation. Providing tenants with properly labeled containers and necessary equipment will aid their participation. Once the program is underway, tenant representatives may monitor the success of the program, educate the residents or employees to help them develop the most efficient recycling habits, and solicit input and feedback. This may increase participation, reduce contaminants being included with recyclables, and help to detect problems with the design of the system. If the recycling program can be designed efficiently to be a regular part of the daily routine, the tenants should not perceive it to be an excessive amount of work.

### Will this cause messy, unsightly areas, attract pests, or cause unpleasant smells?

The program should be designed to be as sanitary as possible. Tenants are usually responsible for preparing materials, such as rinsing leftover food out of glass or metal containers before placing them in recycling containers. By using rigid containers with lids (especially with locks), at the point of contractor's collection, timely pick-ups of materials should be enough for your establishment to avoid problems from animal pests. Remember, collection is required at least twice per month (except in certain limited circumstances where this requirement may be waived). Tenants and the maintenance staff should be educated to keep internal storage areas neat and orderly.



## TENANTS' CONCERN

## Why should I comply with the building's program?

Recycling in the District is mandatory. Furthermore, participation in the program may help to keep trash collection costs lower, which benefits all tenants. Also, recycling conserves resources, and active participation in a successful building-recycling program can provide positive publicity. The building/owner may also offer incentives for tenants to maximize participation, such as an awards program that recognizes good recyclers.

## Where can I go for help? What if I have a question, comment or suggestion?

Make sure the building has a designated recycling coordinator or other responsible party to field any questions tenants may have and to monitor the program in case program adjustments are necessary. Post the coordinator's phone number in collection areas, and print it in all educational materials.

## What if I don't generate any materials collected in the recycling program?

If there are tenants that will not be able to participate in the recycling portion of the program, enlist their aid in implementing effective source reduction measures.

## Why aren't all materials recycled?

Recycling depends on a number of factors, including the availability of space to store materials, the ability of the recycling hauler to collect and process the materials, and the availability of strong, local markets to use the materials that are recovered. Thus, it is not possible to recycle all materials in all building settings. Remember, you must recycle all materials required by law.

## What's next? What else can I do?

Ask tenants if they currently (or plan to) perform any **Source Reduction** activities. Source reduction is the District's first priority for waste reduction, and is often a more economical method of reducing waste than recycling additional materials. In addition, ask tenants if they have in place (or plan to develop) any in-house written recycling, source reduction or procurement policies. Develop a listing, by tenant and activity, to document all source reduction, additional recycling and procurement activities occurring beyond building's program. Remember that it's better to try to make most program changes all at once during the implementation of the program, instead of continually changing things and causing confusion. Let people know, however, that if things aren't working, you may need to make some adjustments to the program, and that you will consider their comments and suggestions.

"Source Reduction" describes the behavior of an individual or an organization who commits to lessening their level of waste production. By discouraging suppliers from using excessive packaging, back-hauling materials (to the supplier) which are unneeded on the job site (shipping pallets, boxes and other containers, etc.), purchasing materials in bulk or concentrated forms, and educating employees on opportunities to reuse items already available to them, typically, overhead is reduced, operational efficiency is improved, and our environment is preserved.

# ADDRESSING MAINTENANCE SERVICE PROVIDERS' CONCERNS



In order to successfully implement a recycling program, building owners and managers must take into account the needs of tenants, maintenance staff, and the hauler. Below are ideas to address concerns commonly raised by the maintenance staff during the implementation of recycling programs.

## What is the role of maintenance staff in the program?

The maintenance staff is typically responsible for collecting materials from the desktop/workstation or housing unit and transporting them to central storage containers or external trash/recycling containers. In many cases, maintenance staff is responsible for ensuring that materials are in the appropriate recycling containers. In order to do so, it will be important to educate maintenance staff regarding how to recognize recyclable materials and potential contaminants. In addition, the maintenance staff may also provide other services such as cleaning, snow removal, or landscaping, which may be affected by the building's recycling program.

## How does the recycling program work? What types of materials will be collected, using what types of containers? Where will these containers be located? How and when will these containers be emptied and how will this impact current sanitation staff's routines and equipment? Where will materials be stored?

It is often helpful to involve the maintenance staff early in the development of the program by inviting maintenance representatives to a formative meeting or to serve on an advisory committee. This way they can contribute their input and feedback into the development of the program. A continuing education program will be essential to convey important information to the maintenance staff. Be sure to provide them with sufficient information describing how the program will work (make sure this information will be available in the language used by the maintenance staff). Furthermore, collection points and containers should be clearly identified so there is no confusion.

## How will the level of maintenance service be changed? What maintenance duties will need to be adjusted or added? How will the frequency of maintenance service be altered? Will we need to charge more for maintenance services?

For many recycling programs, the only changes for maintenance staff will be placing two bags on their cleaning carts, one for trash and one for recyclables. In some circumstances, adding additional services may cause an increase in the maintenance service fees. However, this may often be avoided by rearranging or substituting existing services to accommodate the new services. For example, vacuuming may be reduced from every day to every-other-day so that the time that is freed may be allocated to servicing the recycling containers. As another example, having tenants/employees responsible for emptying desktop recycling bins and the maintenance staff responsible only for servicing the central recycling containers and the trash containers can reduce the anticipated workload of the maintenance staff in the recycling program.

## Will maintenance staff have any responsibilities other than handling materials?

Beyond handling materials, the maintenance staff may also have the additional responsibility of monitoring tenant compliance with the program and alerting the building owner/manager of any problems. Since they are responsible for emptying containers, the maintenance staff will be able to



## MAINTENANCE PROVIDERS' CONCERNS

observe whether tenants are properly separating their recyclables and notify the building manager/owner of significant, on-going problems tenants may be having with the program. The maintenance staff can be supplied with pre-printed notices to attach to containers when tenants are not following the program correctly.

### **Will this cause messy, unsightly areas, attract pest, or cause unpleasant smells? How will safety and security issues be dealt with?**

A well-designed and well-operated program should not result in odors or other nuisance problems. Tenants may be required to prepare materials properly, for example, by rinsing leftover food out of glass or metal containers before placing them in recycling containers, especially if your hauler insists on the removal of caps and lids. More frequent servicing of receptacles by facility staff may alleviate this, if it should occur.

Recycling containers with closing (or sealing) lids may offer the dual benefits of distinguishing open-mouthed waste collection units from recycling units, as well as limit odors and attractions to pests. In addition, tenants and the maintenance staff should be educated to keep internal storage areas neat and orderly. Safety and security measures should remain nearly the same as with refuse collection (adhering to the building and fire codes), with a few common sense modifications. Basic safety measures concerning the processing and storage of recyclable materials should be practiced: do not crush glass unless specified by your hauler or recycling service provider; do not stack papers above four feet (per fire department regulations); and do not smoke in storage areas.

### **Why should maintenance staff participate in the building's recycling/source reduction program?**

A properly designed program will minimize any inconvenience to maintenance staff; obtaining maintenance input during the development of your program will help to ensure that their needs are met. If the maintenance service provider is having difficulty with the new recycling services, it may be necessary to seek competitive bids and contract with a different maintenance service program that can help you have an effective recycling and source reduction program to comply with the District's recycling law.

### **Where can maintenance staff go for help? What if they have questions, comments, problems, or suggestions?**

Make sure the building has a person (recycling coordinator or other responsible party) designated to a) field any questions that the maintenance staff may have, and b) monitor the program in case program adjustments are necessary. Be sure that maintenance representatives are familiar with and have access to the building's recycling coordinator. If questions or problems occur, it may be easier for the maintenance staff to notify their supervisor or representative. The maintenance supervisor should then direct all questions, comments, problems, or suggestions to the building's designated recycling coordinator.

### **What else can maintenance staff do to "green" our business?**

Maintenance staff may engage in source reduction activities, such as composting yard waste, using a mulching lawnmower, installing long-lasting or energy efficient light bulbs or fixtures, and installing reusable furnace or air conditioning filters. They may also implement other changes such as using non-toxic products for cleaning, pest control, snow removal, lawn care, maintenance or plumbing. Document any source reduction activities occurring beyond the building's overall program.

## RECYCLING TIPS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Many aspects of the technical guide may seem more relevant to larger businesses. However, the following section is offered especially to help small retail, professional, or other commercial establishments implement recycling programs. Although your business may not generate large amounts of recyclables, there are still many opportunities for you to recycle. Here are a few suggestions.

### Check with your existing solid waste hauler

If you think you don't generate enough recyclable materials to justify having a separate recycling service, first check with your current hauler or a recycling service provider. In some cases, the cost of adding additional recycling services is offset by a reduction in disposal costs. Therefore, adding new services may not cause any increase in total collection cost. For example, if your current waste stream mostly consists of corrugated cardboard, diverting this material into a recycling program may reduce your waste stream enough to justify less frequent collection. Reducing your disposal service level in combination with your service provider's ability to market your recyclable material may offset any additional costs to recycle the material.

### Develop a "Shared Program"

Work with neighboring businesses to coordinate recycling collection services. For example, you may know several other local businesses that generate small quantities of similar recyclable materials and are also willing to recycle, but don't generate enough materials to justify regular collection or the cost of additional service. You can arrange to have a hauler or recycling service provider make regularly scheduled collection of the material from all of the businesses that are participating in the shared program (unless you have received a waiver, recyclables must be collected at least twice a month). This way the cost to each business may be less than if each entered into a separate agreement with a hauler or recycling service provider.

### Piggyback with Other Businesses

Ask a neighbor who is a larger waste generator if you can add your recyclable material to its collection bin and work out a payment arrangement acceptable to you, the neighbor, and the hauler or recycling service provider. It may be necessary to inform the hauler or recycling service provider of this change.

### Add a Source Reduction Program

Source reduction methods often can have a large impact on your waste stream without requiring a large investment or need for contracting with an additional service provider. For example, by duplexing, (copying or printing on both sides of your paper), and single-spacing your printed materials, you may substantially reduce the amount of office paper that is used and, ultimately, thrown away.

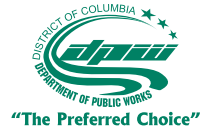
"Source Reduction" describes the behavior of an individual or an organization who commits to lessening their level of waste production. By discouraging suppliers from using excessive packaging, back-hauling materials (to the supplier) which are unneeded on the job site (shipping pallets, boxes and other containers, etc.), purchasing materials in bulk or concentrated forms, and educating employees on opportunities to reuse items already available to them, typically, overhead is reduced, operational efficiency is improved, and our environment is preserved.



## SMALL BUSINESSES' CONCERNS



## TIPS FOR CHOOSING A RECYCLING HAULER



Consider the following in selecting a recycling hauler and negotiating a competitive service agreement.

### Shop Around

There are many companies that are interested in competing for your business. (a listing of registered haulers, complete as of the time of publication, is included in the Commercial Guide). Solicit bids from several companies. This may enable you to secure not only the most competitive rate for recycling service, but also a lower rate for trash collection and disposal service than you are currently paying. Service costs will vary based on a variety of factors, listed below. The more knowledgeable you are, the better equipped you will be to compare, bargain, initiate and resolve disputes with solid waste contracts on behalf of your employer.

The government of the District of Columbia is not in the practice of servicing trash and recycling from private property. It is not uncommon to approach your existing solid waste service as a first step to researching service costs. This conversation has elements of a negotiation, and that your current hauler may be resistant to any process that appears likely to change the basis upon which business is done. Keeping this in mind, call your hauler and set up a meeting to discuss recycling.

### Factors weighed by service providers offering you service quotes:

A company's existing routes or availability of trucks in your area;  
Are they invoicing based on the size of the containers they service, the frequency of their collections, or the weight of the materials you dispose of;  
The cost of leasing vs. owning collection container(s) at your facility;  
The market value of your collected materials, ie. Are your employees separating paper from beverage bottles? Are your employees separating white, copy paper from newspapers and office mail? Will baling your cardboard drop your service costs?

Among these different factors, it's not always easy to compare "apples to apples" therefore you should make sure the price quotes you receive make sense and directly address as many of the above issues as possible.

### When additional services are needed:

Some hauling companies specialize in the handling retirements of confidential materials for information security.

Some companies or waste brokerage firms may provide services and containers beyond your loading dock, e.g. internal collection containers, internal collection services, and/or educational literature and training for employees, residents or janitors in the building.

Competing companies specialize in different types of recycling programs. It can be educational to listen to their proposals to determine whose program will best fit the companies current work style and space limitations.

**Note:** Some recycling companies may try to offer you a "post collection" program, in which recyclables and trash are placed in the same container to be separated later at a processing facility. **Under DC law, such arrangements are not acceptable. The mandated recyclables must be collected in a container(s) separate from other trash.**



## TIPS FOR HAULER NEGOTIATION

You may also wish to sign a longer-term contract with a hauler that specifies what future increases in rates will be. This will prevent you from selecting a company that offered a low price only to win the bid, with the intent of raising prices once the program is up and running.

Be aware that market values for collected materials vary over time; however, your hauler is not entitled to eliminate materials from pickup services simply because their market value has dropped; the hauler must abide by the terms of your contract.

Although competing companies will vary in their ability or willingness to recycle certain materials, your hauler must collect all required materials.

## Look For Quality

Selecting a service provider is not only an issue of cost, but also one of selecting a reputable company that will provide you with a high quality service. Ask for references.

## Use Their Help

Conduct a walk-through of your building with bidders. Haulers are experienced recyclers and can provide useful suggestions for implementing an efficient recycling program.

## Go In With Others

Small establishments should consider jointly procuring recycling services for better prices (*see the section titled RECYCLING TIPS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES*).

## Be Smart

Certain necessary information may not be clearly indicated in the contract. For example, collection charges may be based upon materials' weight, volume (container size), or frequency of service. If the collection charge is based on volume, it is important to know whether the amount charged is the same regardless of whether or not a container that your hauler takes away is full. It is useful to audit this process regularly to be sure your service arrangements remain appropriate to the waste stream generated from your property.

Other relevant factors may be difficult to determine. There is not likely to be a direct relationship between reduced collection frequency and reduced costs. For example, if you are currently paying \$100 per month for weekly collection (you might assume a cost \$25 per visit), reducing collection to twice a month may reduce collection cost, but not by a full \$50 per month.

Beware of haulers who assert you are required by law to sign a contract with their particular service. While some cities assign solid waste haulers to certain territories (called "franchises"), the District of Columbia does not. You are required to implement an effective recycling program but selecting the best registered hauler to help you implement the program is up to you.

Actual reductions, if any, will depend on the hauler's rate structure. If your contract includes a particular rate structure for a particular amount of time, even if you reduce the amount of waste set out for collection you may not be able to reduce collection cost until you negotiate a new contract.

Some haulers may try to force a program on you that is inconsistent with your needs or desires. For instance, a hauler may tell you that the materials you wish to recycle cannot effectively be recycled

or that they are recycling a material even though it is not marketable. That hauler simply may not have the experience or capability to recycle certain materials. If you are told this you may want to contact another hauler. If you have any questions about this, please notify the DC Office of Recycling at (202) 645-8245.

Beware of haulers who assert you are required by law to sign a contract with their particular service. While some cities assign solid waste haulers to certain territories (called “franchises”), the District of Columbia does not. You are required to implement an effective recycling program but selecting the best registered hauler to help you implement the program is up to you.

A recycling hauler who does not re-register (annually) with the DC Office of Recycling is not considered legitimate and may cause your Recycling Plan to be rejected. Ask for that company’s current registration letter and/or obtain a copy of the official Registered Haulers List from the DC Office of Recycling. ***Take note of the publishing date as recycling hauler registrations expire every March.***



## **BECOME A SELF IMPLEMENTER (Self Hauler)**

Under certain circumstances, instead of contracting with a hauler to collect recyclables, you may be granted permission to become a **Self-Implementer**. In this case, you would periodically bring recyclables to a drop-off or buy-back center (lists of these facilities are available from the Office of Recycling). For example, if you don't generate beverages consistently over the course of a month, it may be more cost effective for you to deliver these materials to a drop-off center on an as-needed basis (no less than twice-per-month) instead of contracting for regular collection services. Remember to document your use of drop-off or buy-back facilities (e.g. receipts showing weight of materials delivered), as the District requires all **self-implementers** to report their tonnage on a monthly basis. For more information you may refer to the District's Commercial Recycling Guide or contact the DC Office of Recycling.

If a DC Hauler Registration Application is not attached, as well as a tonnage report form, please visit the Office of Recycling website at [recycle.dpw.dc.gov](http://recycle.dpw.dc.gov) or call 202-645-7191.



**“SELF IMPLEMENTATION”  
AN ALTERNATIVE TO PICK-UPS**



# COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS CHECKLIST FOR COMPLIANCE



The following checklist is provided to help you determine whether or not you have met all the requirements of the District's recycling laws. Each of the following requirements must be met in order to be in compliance with the law. You must:

- ☐ Develop a recycling program that provides for the separation of all paper (e.g. newspaper, office paper, and corrugated cardboard), aluminum, steel and tin cans, and glass bottles and jars.
- ☐ Hire a registered recycling hauler (or complete a Self-Implementer registration) to remove mandated recyclables from your facility at least twice per month;
- ☐ Ensure that you have adequate number of containers to completely enclose all stored waste and recyclables at point-of-pickup (e.g. loading dock or parking lot);
- ☐ Ensure that all containers are labeled to identify their contents;
- ☐ Ensure that all containers are being used properly to avoid contamination (ie. no mandated recyclables in trash, no contamination in your mandated recycles' bins)
- ☐ Ensure that you are informing your visitors/tenants/employees of their role in your recycling program.
- ☐ Ensure that you have submitted your **Recycling Plan** form via mail, fax or internet, and have a confirmation on file with an inspection date.
- ☐ File and maintain your Recycling Plan approval letter for easy access should your designated Recycling Coordinator be asked to present it during a visit from a recycling officer.
- ☐ Update your documented **Recycling Plan**, every two years: \_\_\_\_\_ (date of next submission);
- ☐ Ensure that your storage of recyclable materials does not violate D.C. Fire Codes.

Maintain a copy of your recycling plan on the premises for inspection by the Department of Public Works Office of Recycling. The plan must include at a minimum:

- ☐ The exact name of company, corporation, partnership or sole proprietor doing business in the District of Columbia and registered with the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs as required;
- ☐ Ward number where building is located;
- ☐ Name of the building in which the company is located;
- ☐ Address where the company is located;
- ☐ On-site person who is responsible for planning and monitoring of recycling;
- ☐ The telephone number of the building manager or person responsible for day-to-day operations of the buildings;
- ☐ Type of commercial establishment;
- ☐ Total square footage of building, total square footage of occupied office space and number of units;



## RECYCLING PROGRAM CHECKLIST

- ☐ Number of employees in the building;
- ☐ Name of current solid waste hauler;
- ☐ Method employees or tenant will be notified of the recycling program in this facility;
- ☐ How recyclables will be collected;
- ☐ Name of recycling hauler and registration number (or acceptable evidence of an approved self-hauling plan);
- ☐ Start and expiration dates of your recycling contract;
- ☐ Name(s) and addresses of buildings sharing the recycling plan; and
- ☐ Your signature
- ☐ Start and expiration dates of your recycling contract;
- ☐ Name(s) and addresses of buildings sharing the recycling plan; and
- ☐ Your signature

## HAULERS CHECKLIST FOR COMPLIANCE



Each person, organization, or agent engaged in the business of collecting or processing recyclable materials shall register with the D.C. Office of Recycling. The following checklist has been provided to help haulers determine whether or not they have met all the requirements of the District's recycling laws. Each of the following requirements must be met in order to be in compliance with the law.

- ☐ Applications for recycling registration shall be submitted to the Office of Recycling by the first Monday in March of each year, and expire on the Sunday preceding the first Monday in March of the following year;
- ☐ The fee for this registration shall be twenty-four dollars (\$24) per vehicle and shall be paid annually. New businesses may have the registration fee pro-rated;
- ☐ This registration is in addition to any other required license;
- ☐ All registered recycling collectors shall provide for the recycling of all materials collected from any property in accordance with agreements in effect between business owners or their agents and the registered recycling collector;
- ☐ Owners and occupants shall not be held liable for the failure of registered recycling collectors to perform services under the terms of their agreement;
- ☐ An effective recycling program must be developed and implemented that provides for the collection of paper, aluminum, steel and tin cans, and brown, green and clear glass bottles and jars, (plastic food and beverage containers are optional);
- ☐ Each person or business, including self-implementers engaged in the collection or recycling of recyclables, must submit monthly reports and corresponding certified scale tickets to the D.C. Office of Recycling verifying the tonnage of recyclable materials collected by commodity;
- ☐ Monthly reports shall be submitted by the fifteenth (15th) day of the following month (i.e., recyclable collected in January must be recorded in the report received by February 15th);
- ☐ Recyclables shall not be deposited at any District solid waste disposal facility unless otherwise approved by the Department of Public Works;
- ☐ The contents of vehicles hauling solid waste to any District of Columbia disposal facility shall be subject to visual inspection for evidence of recyclables. If recyclables are detected, the driver of the vehicle shall be required to dump the load in an area away from regular dumping activities. If, upon separation and inspection of the vehicle's contents, a substantial amount of the load (approximately 30%) is determined to be recyclable, the hauler may receive a Notice of Violation in accordance with 21 DCMR Section 2061;



## HAULERS' REGISTRATION CHECKLIST



## SAMPLE LETTERS, MEMOS AND SIGNS



A successful program will rely on the coordination of more than just service contractors; property management, tenants, employees and facility maintenance and sanitation staff must be informed and committed to the success of your program. The following letters are provided as models for of the sort of language one might use in proposing a recycling program to a variety of business associates. Tailor Schmancy, LLC is a fictional office, used here to demonstrate a variety of business relationships and requests. Feel free to use ideas from these letters and memos, and the signs that follow, for your own campaigns.

### SAMPLE LETTERS- Property Management to Tenant

#### MEMO: Business Recycling Requirements of District of Columbia

In order to ensure compliance with Commercial Recycling Regulations within the District of Columbia, Tailor Schmancy, LLC would like to advise its tenants of the following:

According to the D.C. Department of Public Works, recycling is mandatory for all District of Columbia businesses.

Consider the following:

- Recycling is the law in D.C. (DC Code § 8-1001, et seq.)
- All commercial properties must separate specific materials from their waste;
- All commercial properties are required to file a Recycling Plan, updated ever two years;
- Businesses that recycle avoid hefty fines; ranging from \$25 to \$1,000;
- Businesses that commit to Reuse and Recycling programs may find substantial cost benefits, especially those generating a lot of white paper, cardboard, and aluminum.

Any premises not authorized to receive municipal trash and recycling collection services are considered a business or commercial establishment. Under DC law all businesses located in the District of Columbia must submit a recycling plan to the DPW Office of Recycling and implement an on-going recycling program. A commercial recycling program includes separation of recyclables from other solid waste, ensuring an adequate number of containers for separated recyclables and using a licensed, registered recycling hauler to regularly pick up recyclables (or developing an approved program to haul away your own recyclables).

[DESCRIBE SPECIFICALLY HOW OWNER/PROPERTY MANAGER PLANS TO IMPLEMENT LAW]

The D.C. Office of Recycling recommends that you obtain a copy of the Department of Public Works Commercial Recycling Guide. This document gives an overview of the District's expectations and includes the specific forms necessary to register a business's Solid Waste Recycling Plan. To learn more, please visit our website: [www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov](http://www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov).

If you have any questions or for additional assistance, please contact: \_\_\_\_\_, Customer Service Coordinator, (202) 555-1239.



## SAMPLE LETTERS, MEMOS AND SIGNS



Dear Property Management Representative:

Tailor Schmancy, LLC would like to learn about the intentions of XYZ Property Management with regard to establishing a recycling program at our building at 1850 Pennsylvania, NW. Recycling is more than the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense, and in our city, it's the law. The right recycling program can reduce this building's trash by 25 percent or more, and that means savings to you. Even if there are initial recycling costs, such as the rental or purchase of recycling bins, these may be offset by the savings in waste disposal costs.

About 70 percent of typical office waste is PAPER. Multiplied by the number of offices in this building, that adds up to a lot of paper each year. Because this building has no recycling program, all that wastepaper (plus beverage containers, cardboard boxes, and outdated phone books) produced by your tenants is going to the landfill. And that means wasted money and resources. There is a better way, and that's why I'm writing you.

Since business and industry generate about two-thirds of the District's waste, it is up to us to do our part. Office recycling programs must become the standard, not the exception. I realize that there are numerous management issues to be considered (space for recycling bins, security, access to the bins, etc.), but thousands of other businesses in the region are already recycling, so we know it can be done. The availability of recycling services will be a major consideration in our decision to continue leasing space in this building.

Please contact me this week so we may determine the best course of action to make recycling available at this facility.

Signed,

SAMPLE LETTERS- Property Management to Tenant

MEMO: Business Recycling Requirements of District of Columbia

In order to ensure compliance with Commercial Recycling Regulations within the District of Columbia, Tailor Schmancy, LLC would like to advise its tenants of the following:

According to the D.C. Department of Public Works, recycling is mandatory for all District of Columbia businesses.

Consider the following:

Recycling is the law in D.C. (DC Code § 8-1001, et seq.)

All commercial properties must separate specific materials from their waste;

All commercial properties are required to file a Recycling Plan, updated every two years;

Businesses that recycle avoid hefty fines; ranging from \$25 to \$1,000;

Businesses that commit to Reuse and Recycling programs may find substantial cost benefits, especially those generating a lot of white paper, cardboard, and aluminum.

Any premises not authorized to receive municipal trash and recycling collection services are considered a business or commercial establishment. Under DC law all businesses located in the District of Columbia must submit a recycling plan to the DPW Office of Recycling and implement an on-going recycling program. A commercial recycling program includes separation of recyclables from other solid waste, ensuring an adequate number of containers for separated recyclables and using a licensed, registered recycling hauler to regularly pick up recyclables (or developing an approved program to haul away your own recyclables).

[DESCRIBE SPECIFICALLY HOW OWNER/PROPERTY MANAGER PLANS TO IMPLEMENT LAW]

The D.C. Office of Recycling recommends that you obtain a copy of the Department of Public Works Commercial Recycling Guide. This document gives an overview of the District's expectations and includes the specific forms necessary to register a business's Solid Waste Recycling Plan. To learn more, please visit their website: HYPERLINK "<http://www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov>" [www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov](http://www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov).

If you have any questions or for additional assistance, please contact: \_\_\_\_\_, Customer Service Coordinator, (202) 555-1239.

## SAMPLE LABELS AND SIGNS

*Show That You Care. Recycle Everywhere!*



*Message brought to you by the Office of Property Management's Recycling Program*



TAILOR SCHMANCY, LLC.  
A Property Management Group

**“Office Greening”** is a movement  
you will hear a lot more of in the coming months.

*“Please support Taylor Schmancy,  
LLC’s commitment to our environment  
by depositing recyclable materials in  
the designated receptacles.”*

*— Tom Schmancy, CEO*

*Communities. Conservation. Clients.  
Make the Connection*



TAILOR SCHMANCY, LLC.  
A Property Management Group

For questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ (ext.) \_\_\_\_\_

***Encourage Recycling,  
BY Recycling***

***Encourage Recycling,  
BUY Recycled***

*Communities, Clients, Conservation.  
Make the Connection.*



TAILOR SCHMANZY, LLC.  
A Property Management Group

For questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ (ext.) \_\_\_\_\_



***Office  
Paper***



***Bottles  
&  
Cans***



***Think Outside the Bin***



***Electronics***



***Injet  
&  
Toner***



TAILOR SCHMANZY, LLC.  
A Property Management Group

For questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ (ext.) \_\_\_\_\_

**RECYCLE HERE**

**No Trash, Please!**

**NEWSPAPER &  
OFFICE PAPER**

**RECYCLING  
INSTRUCTIONS**

Service Pick-Up is Mon & Thu

**CORRUGATED CARDBOARD**

FLATTEN & TIE

**BOTTLES & CANS**

EMPTY ALL BEVERAGES, PLACE IN  
DESIGNATED DUMPSTER AT LOADING DOCK



YOU ARE FREE TO USE THIS ARTWORK  
ON RECYCLING CONTAINERS OR SIGNS



YOU ARE FREE TO USE THIS ARTWORK  
ON RECYCLING CONTAINERS OR SIGNS

## APPENDIX

*Conversion of volume to  
approximate weight for  
recyclable materials*

### NEWSPAPER

1 cubic yard = 600 lbs  
Cubic yards = 1 ton  
One 12” stack = 35 lbs

### CORRUGATED

*Un-compacted-baled*  
1 cubic yard = 285 lbs  
7.018 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*Compacted*  
1 cubic yard = 507.6  
3.940 cubic yards = 1 ton

### GLASS

*Loose, whole bottles*  
1 cubic yard = 600 lbs  
3.333 cubic yards = 1 ton  
1 grocery bag = 16 lbs  
175 lbs to one 55-gallon drum  
*Crushed (manually broken)*  
1 cubic yard = 1000 lbs  
2000 cubic yards = 1 ton  
300 lbs to one 55-gallon drum  
*Crushed (mechanically broken)*  
1 cubic yard = 1800 lbs  
1,111 cubic yards = 1 ton  
550 lbs to one 55-gallon drum

### ORGANIC MATERIAL

*Leaves (un-composted/un-  
compacted)*  
1 cubic yard = 250 lbs  
8,000 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*Leaves (un-composted/  
compacted)*  
1 cubic yard = 450 lbs  
4,444 cubic yards = 1 ton

*Leaves (composted/  
vacuumed)*

1 cubic yard = 350 lbs  
5,714 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*Wood Chips*  
1 cubic yard = 500  
4,000 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*Grass Clipping*  
1 cubic yard = 404 lbs  
4,950 cubic yards = 1 ton

### PLASTIC

*PET (soda bottles)*  
1 cubic yard = 30 lbs  
66,666 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*HDPE (whole)*  
1 cubic yard = 25 lbs  
80,000 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*HDPE (flat)*  
1 cubic yard = 50 lbs  
40,000 cubic yards = 1 ton

### OFFICE PAPER

*Bulk container*  
1 cubic yard = 500 lbs

### ALUMINUM CANS

*Whole*  
1 cubic yard = 74 lbs  
27.027 cubic yards = 1 ton  
One grocery bag = 1.5 lbs  
One large plastic bag = 21 lbs  
*Flattened*  
1 cubic yard = 850 lbs  
2.353 cubic yards = 1 ton

### FERROUS CANS

*Whole*  
1 cubic yard = 150 lbs  
13.333 cubic yards = 1 ton  
*Flattened*  
1 cubic yard = 850 lbs  
2.353 cubic yards = 1 ton

### OTHER MATERIALS

*Used Motor Oil*  
7 lbs = 1 gallon  
285.714 gallons = 1 ton  
*Passenger Car Tires*  
1 tire = 20 lbs  
100.00 tires = 1 ton  
*Batteries*  
1 batter = 33 lbs  
60.606 batters = 1 ton  
*Automobiles*  
1 automobile = 2050 lbs  
*Truck Tires*  
1 tire = 20 lbs  
22.222 tires = 1 ton

*Food Waste (solid/liquid fats)*  
412.5 lbs to one 55-gallon drum  
4.848 drum = 1 ton  
*Asphalt pavement (milled)*  
1” thick –2”max. Credit  
1 square yard = 115 lbs  
17.391 square yards = 1 ton

*In certain limited circumstances an entity may be allowed to haul away its recyclables on its own, rather than using a registered recycling hauler. See the section titled “Becoming a Self Implementer (Self Hauler)” later in this guide.*







***Office of Recycling***

3220 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
202-645-8245 (Hot Line)  
202-645-6518 (Fax)  
E-mail: [recycle@dc.gov](mailto:recycle@dc.gov)  
[www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov](http://www.recycle.dpw.dc.gov)

*This guide is intended as a supplement to the DC Commercial Recycling Guide. To obtain a copy of the DC Commercial Recycling Guide please contact the DC Office of Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245. Recycling is mandatory in the District of Columbia.*